

NUTRITION RFI RESPONSES

03/25/2003

SUMMARY

Organization	Major Themes & Ideas	Page
1. Maple Valley Community Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transportation• Improve plate presentation (garnishes, choice of sides)• More publicity• Fresh produce (charge \$ if necessary)	2
2. Northshore Senior Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Light lunch alternative (soup/sandwich/salad)	2
3. Sea Mar	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transportation – increased funding for Senior Service vans• Health education course• Dance and exercise courses• Entertainment and celebration activities• ESL classes• Outreach support• Language-appropriate publicity	3
4. Asian Counseling and Referral Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partner with Sikh community• Ballroom dancing, aerobics classes• Improve transportation• Help Seattle Korean Elderly Assn with rent at new site• Hire activity coordinator• Hire interpreters• Purchase A/V equipment (DVD players, TVs, etc)	5
5. Neighborhood Farmer's Market Alliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Field trips to farmer's markets• Family day	8
6. Fremont Public Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaboration between FPA's Operation Frontline, Lettuce Link, and Senior Nutrition programs. Incorporate cooking class, organic produce, and gardening into new meal site.	8
7. Consolidated Food Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Surveys of non-participants• Incentives to participate• Promotions	10

MAPLE VALLEY COMMUNITY CENTER (ANTONIA KERNEY)

I am the Senior Program Director at the Maple Valley Community Center. We have the lunch program 3 days per week. We are also trying to figure out ways to bring up the numbers. I really think we need to look at the fact that the meal program is not for the younger seniors who are more active and would rather make lunch at home or go out to a restaurant. I think we need to concentrate on bringing in the elderly who have no transportation and maybe start a hot meal program instead of the frozen Meals on Wheels. I know other states deliver hot meals to seniors the day of their lunch programs. This would require more volunteers and coordinators to manage this. I do see that I lose MOW people after one or two deliveries because they don't want a frozen meal.

The program does have a reputation of serving "institutionalized food". I think if we look at plate presentation, garnishes, choice of sides might help with the perception, however this will create more work for the cook and I don't know if it can be accomplished on their limited hours.

Another area to look at is publicity. I do include information in our local papers senior column but I cannot afford to take out an advertisement. I haven't seen anything that in the Seattle Times or the South County Journal that lists locations, days and times for meals available to seniors.

Those who can afford to pay do not mind paying for quality. I think they would pay more for fresh produce, always having a side salad etc.

NORTHSHORE SENIOR CENTER (MARIANNE LOGERFO)

Thank you for the opportunity to share a dream we have had for a long time. We have had a good experience with the nutrition program here at the Northshore Senior Center. We serve about 60 people a day at the senior center and another 40 or more through our adult day health centers. While we have been pleased, on the whole, with the quality of the hot meal and our service levels have remained stable over many years, we have always felt a pressing need to offer a soup/sandwich/salad alternative of the same caliber. Many of our participants are not accustomed to a full, hot meal at midday, preferring instead a lighter lunch with fewer calories. The nutrition program staff inaugurated a light lunch alternative a number of years ago, but it falls far short of the quality of the hot meal and has proven to be unacceptably disappointing to most of our diners.

We assume that it must be a challenge to produce the sandwich with soup or salad at the same cost and meeting the same ADA standards as the hot meal, but we would be extremely grateful if ADS would support a pilot program that delivered the goods! We believe that a high quality light lunch alternative might well increase participation by 50% or more, improve satisfaction, serve the same geographic area, address the needs of those following a more restricted calorie diet, appeal to underserved populations and hold the per meal cost steady.

Judging from discussions with our colleagues, there are other senior centers who feel as passionately as we do about the need for the light lunch and would also be willing to advocate for and help develop a cost effective plan. The nutrition program is a powerful tool for socialization and education, but its benefits are inaccessible to those for whom a large midday meal is strange, unappealing or inadvisable.

SEA MAR

As a contract agency for the ADS Nutrition Outreach program we are excited to contribute to the RFI in an effort to explore new opportunities that will benefit all seniors. The following recommendations are a collaborative effort on behalf of the Preventive Health Services Department Head, the Nutrition Outreach/Socialization Program Manager, and the Senior Advocate staff.

The Sea Mar Latino Senior Nutrition Outreach/Socialization Program aims to assist the underserved Latino senior community, who may be isolated because of rural locations and by linguistic barriers. Sea Mar provides client satisfaction by creating culturally and linguistically appropriate services for Latino seniors in the peripheral areas around the City of Seattle. The Sea Mar Nutrition program is designed to work collaboratively with the existing Senior Center sites in Highline, Shoreline, N. Bellevue, and Des Moines. The Kirkland Senior Center also receives services from the Sea Mar Nutrition program; however these services are funded by the City of Kirkland. During the month of January, 2002, the Nutrition program served a total of 112 clients. The attendance at each senior center averaged to around 25 people throughout the week who participated in activities and socialized over the meal provided. The program has enjoyed high attendance rates and an ever growing need and appreciation for the services provided.

- *Transportation:*
 - The Sea Mar Latino Senior Nutrition Program has experienced an increase in the amount of time allocated to transportation. This is a direct effect from reduced funding and services provided to transportation programs that benefit the elderly and disabled. Sea Mar has successfully collaborated efforts with Senior Service Transportation Vans and Metro's ACCESS program. However, the need for transportation to and from the Senior Center's still prevails. Many clients have successfully learned how to use the bus system, yet some clients live in locations where the bus is not easily accessible, and due to physical limitations cannot walk long distances to take the bus. The design includes increased ADS funding to support Senior Service Vans which would allow for a larger area of transportation coverage for the population to access to the Senior Centers. Specifically, the geographic areas of Issaquah, Shoreline, and the greater south Seattle area.
- *Senior Center Site Activities*
 - Senior Center Health Initiative: To improve overall client physical and mental health it is proposed that a year-long health education course be developed. The programs will be taught in part by professionals who specialize in a topic and in part by the Senior Advocates. Ideally a health education theme would be

addressed at each senior center monthly. Such information would be provided in English and Spanish. Each month would delineate a new topic for health education. For example:

January – Alzheimer's
February – Diabetes: What It Entails
March – Eating Healthy for a Happy Lifestyle
April – The Effect of Mental Health: Thinking Proactively
May – Depression: Dealing With It On A Personal Level
June – How to Fit Exercise Into Your Daily Life
July – Literacy Classes
August – English as a Second Language Courses
September – Family Ties and Mental Health
October – Depression: Helping Family Members Cope
November – Diabetes: How to Care for You & Your Family
December – The Spirit of the Holiday Season – Positive Thinking

The design would involve collaborations with existing sites. The yearly calendar would be developed at the beginning of each year. Efforts would be made by the Senior Center staff and the Sea Mar Staff and Manager to coordinate lessons and activities in both Spanish and English to involve all senior members of the center. This would improve client satisfaction and overall health care awareness. The expected cost is \$3000.

- Physical Activity: Varying Senior Center sites have Dance and Exercise courses which are offered at a cost to the seniors. It has been the experience of the Senior Advocates that these prices almost always exceed the financial capabilities of our clients. We would like to request funding to subsidize clients who would actively participate in such activities, increasing the diversity of individuals participating in Senior Center activities, while decreasing the overall risk of depression and isolation. With additional funding more culturally appropriate activities/exercise could be arranged, such as cultural dances and exercise led in Spanish. Sea Mar would commit to working in collaboration with existing Senior Centers to get a discounted rate or scholarship for the clients. The expected cost is \$2500.
- Entertainment/Celebrations/Activities: The Senior Advocates have experienced limited funding and barriers in their ability to provide entertainment and occasional celebration activities for the clients. Funding for activities/celebrations is understandably not prioritized in comparison with other necessities in the Nutrition program, such as food and transportation issues. However, many clients express the desire to have more celebrations, especially during the holiday season and around Cinco de Mayo. Additional funding is requested to provide arts/crafts materials and other necessities required for activities at the Senior Centers. A small amount of funding allocated to these types of celebrations and activities would increase client satisfaction. These opportunities would also encourage clients from different ethnic populations to partake in the activities. The design would be a collaborative effort with existing Senior Center sites and the Sea Mar Nutrition program advocates. The expected cost is \$2000.

- **ESL Program:** The Latino community attending the Senior Centers needs to have additional financial support to provide English as a Second Language classes for all of the Senior Centers. It is requested that the ADS Nutrition program continually provide funding for ESL Classes to be provided at all Senior Centers. Currently, ESL Classes are being provided at all Senior Centers, with the exception of N. Bellevue. However, these ESL Classes are dependant upon other agencies/institutions to provide the lessons. Continuation of the courses is at the discretion of these agencies/institutions (Highline Community College, AmeriCorps, and other volunteers). It is requested that ADS provide funding to hire a ESL instructor that floats regularly to varying Senior Center sites that demonstrate need for such services. .
- ***Outreach / Marketing:***
 - **Outreach:** Additional support staff could be used to develop partnerships with new centers and also expand services at existing Senior Center sites. The additional staff members would be a wonderful asset which would allow for an increase in the number of hours a representative would be able to stay at a site to provide services and activities for clients. Additional staff would also be utilized in conducting outreach for program development/implementation at other Senior Center sites that do not currently have a Sea Mar Nutrition program. Ideally 2-3 additional part time staff members would primarily work in the field, at varying senior center sites, thus additional office space would not be necessary. An increase in the number of staff members would address the community need for staff members to stay longer hours with the clients at the existing Senior Centers, and also create partnerships in new geographic areas of Seattle where the Latino population has blossomed (such as N. Seattle and W. Seattle).
 - **Publications:** To increase awareness to the target population in need it is requested that ADS provide additional finances to allow for Sea Mar to acquire the necessary means to produce and/or purchase language appropriate information regarding health and nutrition educational information.

All recommendations would be designed with collaborative efforts from the existing Senior Center sites. Currently the Sea Mar Nutrition Program is providing assistance the ADS target population 60 years and older, these additional programs would only encourage greater participation and overall client satisfaction with the activities and programs provided to the clients. The cost of each recommendation is minimal in comparison with the benefits provided to the clients.

ASIAN COUNSELING AND REFERRAL SERVICE

Asian Counseling and Referral Service (ACRS) has been providing nutritious and hot ethnic meals to over a thousand seniors, across four different communities, annually.

Although built around food, the nutrition program is about more than just a warm ethnic lunch. ACRS currently has five sites and depending on the site, seniors gather early to

play Go or Chinese chess, do Karaoke, play instruments or practice singing, and attend citizenship or English-language classes.

According to one Vietnamese senior at one of our Vietnamese sites, “this is a good place to get in touch with what we’re used to, what we left behind ‘in the country.’” Such sentiments are shared among most of the elderly participants, who can hardly wait to attend the Nutrition Program.

Despite many invaluable benefits, there still is room for improvement. Unfortunately, impediments exist that hinder some seniors from attending these programs, while the need for such programs continues to grow, as the Asian Pacific American (APA) community remains one of the fastest-growing populations in King County. As requested, the following are some ideas for improving the Senior Nutrition Program:

Expanding the Service Population

ACRS would like to partner with the Sikh community and start a nutrition program at the Gurudwara temple in Renton. 1000 South Asian individuals attend the temple on Sundays and an estimated 75-100 participants are age 60 and above. It also has a large kitchen facility, which would meet the guidelines of the public health department. The Sikh community has been a target of many racially motivated hate-crimes since 9/11. And despite a rather large contingency in King County, the community has not connected to the County’s social service network. Consequently, majority of the seniors are very isolated and in need of transportation, social and recreational activities. ACRS has already established a working relationship with the community through its Telecommunication Information Accessibility Project. By starting a South Asian Senior Nutrition Program, ACRS hopes to cultivate this partnership and in the process, promote the health, social and emotional well-being of the community.

Increasing Socialization

The Senior Nutrition Program enables APA seniors to meet on a weekly basis and engage in physical and emotional entertainment. These activities help them relieve stress, keep them mentally alert, promote aerobic exercise and develop new hobbies—the benefits are truly enumerable. ACRS recognizes the importance of socialization among seniors and it plans to increase the frequency and variety of such activities. ACRS also recently partnered with the Health Promotion Research Center at the University of Washington and facilitated focus groups with seniors from various APA communities, on the subject of physical activity. As a result, ACRS was able to ascertain what type of physical activities are popular among APA seniors, what type of activities are currently available and the type of activities that are needed. Many seniors were interested in meeting on a regular basis to learn ballroom dancing and aerobics. ACRS will try to find bilingual instructors and develop new classes to meet these needs in the future. We envision that it wouldn’t be too difficult to find an instructor and create a culturally appropriate curriculum, but finding a location to meet on a regular basis might present a formidable challenge.

Locating New Sites and Adequate Transportation for the Program

It is not uncommon to find seniors, who lack adequate transportation and find themselves having to take three different buses and walk a distance to attend the

nutrition program. In the past, door-to-door transportation services to program sites were available, which made it much easier for seniors from Federal Way or Shoreline to attend the programs. However, such services are only considered tales of the more prosperous years. Currently, it would be difficult to find new sites that would meet the requirements of the health department and would also be willing to host a senior nutrition program. Therefore, despite its inconvenience to some seniors, these seniors are still lucky to have a nutrition program to attend. Some are not so lucky. For example, the Cambodian senior nutrition program closed, because the site no longer met the requirements of the health department. Additionally, Seattle Korean Elderly Association (SKEA), which is housed in the Langston Hughes Art Center at 104 17th Ave., was recently asked to vacate its space and searching for another space has been extremely difficult. However, ACRS is contacting churches and community centers to alleviate this problem. Once it finds an adequate site, SKEA might need the City to help with rent. To resolve the greater issue of space and transportation, ACRS is looking at other innovative options. For example, it is considering the option of partnering with a senior center in Shoreline to host weekly aerobic classes or dancing classes. The center has a van and a volunteer, who could provide transportation for the participants. Such an arrangement would enable seniors to also meet and socialize on days when nutrition programs do not meet. Furthermore, seniors from north King County wouldn't have to travel far to obtain services. ACRS will form similar partnerships in the future.

Hiring an Activity Coordinator

If the City could provide funding, ACRS would like to hire an activity coordinator, who would be able to coordinate various activities that take place at the ACRS nutrition program sites. This individual will coordinate ESL classes, foster links with the Parks and Recreations Department, educate seniors on how to better utilize public transportation, and recruit and train volunteers.

Hiring Interpreters

ACRS recognizes the importance of food safety and difficulties that might arise from cultural differences in handling food. Therefore, if the City made funding available, ACRS would like to hire interpreters, who would work with the dietitian to increase food safety knowledge to seniors and limited English-speaking volunteers. The interpreters would develop audio and visual training materials, and conduct workshops and coordinate nutrition festivals. Developed materials could also be distributed to other nutrition programs throughout the State.

Technological Improvements

With the belief that senior nutrition programs exist to provide more than hot ethnic meals, but also to meet social, physical, emotional and cultural needs of seniors, ACRS recognizes the need for technological improvements of the nutrition programs. It would be of great benefit to the senior participants, if each program had a portable TV/ VCR, a DVD player and a portable sound system with a microphone. These equipments would provide seniors with the opportunity to watch ethnic movies, sing and listen to ethnic songs and participate in A/V presentations.

NEIGHBORHOOD FARMER'S MARKET ALLIANCE (KAREN KINNEY)

I work with the neighborhood farmers markets in Seattle and would love to see more senior participation at the markets. We are working with Kim Kelley to expand the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program to mobile seniors so they could get vouchers to come and spend at the markets.

Other ideas - have senior centers make field trips to markets. The markets have music, cooking demos, other events that help add ambience and a festive atmosphere. The Central Area Senior Center has done that in the past. Some centers don't have buses to do that though. Maybe a market could partner with a senior center(s) and have a special seniors day with special events to honor seniors, special foods/nutrition events or something like that. Is there a national seniors day or week? I think there was one a few years ago because we had the CASC sliders do a dance routine, had a senior chef do a cooking demo, etc.

Another idea is to have a family day, honoring seniors who are raising grandchildren. I know Rep Eric Pettigrew sponsored some legislation in Olympia to create an ombudsman position. There's a lot you could do with nutrition, etc. with that.

I'd be glad to brainstorm more ideas with interested people, but don't have the time to coordinate anything. I could participate with others if someone else was taking the leadership role on any projects, events, etc.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide ideas.

Sincerely,

Karen Kinney
Neighborhood Farmers Market Alliance

FREMONT PUBLIC ASSOCIATION

Fremont Public Association's response to Aging and Disability Services' Request for Information on Improving the Senior Nutrition Program

FPA proposes to bring together the skills and experience of it's Operation Frontline, Lettuce Link and Senior Nutrition programs for a vital and responsive approach to meeting the nutritional needs of our senior community while maintaining the integrity of the Congregate Meal Program.

For three years FPA operated a congregate meal program at selected Seattle and King County Housing Authority sites. We contracted with FareStart to provide nutritious, senior friendly evening meals. While the high cost of operating the program kept us from continuing it in 2003, the program was successful in meeting the socialization and nutritional needs of many low-income seniors living in SHA and KCHA residences. The experience taught us much about what attracts seniors to a congregate meal site.

FPA's Operation Frontline program mobilizes culinary and nutrition professionals to teach six-week classes on nutrition, healthy cooking, and food budgeting to individuals at risk of hunger and malnutrition. Each Operation Frontline class focuses on a different theme, such as following the food guide pyramid, shopping effectively, and cooking nutritious meals. Chef instructors create and demonstrate nutritious and low-cost recipes for participants to learn and try at home. The classes are taught at non-profit community centers for low-income individuals throughout the greater Seattle area. During the past three years Operation Frontline staff have organized many cooking classes for our Partners in Caring and SPICE senior programs. Operation Frontline offerings include Mission Delicious, a one-time class that could be incorporated into the new FPA Senior Nutrition program. This class would offer congregate meal participants an opportunity to learn about cooking tasty, nutritious meals.

FPA's Lettuce Link program connects community and backyard gardeners with their local food bank. Each year, 20,000 pounds of fresh, organic produce is collected and donated through this collaboration. The produce enhances the food bags distributed at food banks, in addition to providing organic vegetables that would otherwise be unavailable. In addition to filling hungry tummies with fresh vegetables, Lettuce Link works on a longer-term solution to hunger; teaching people to grow their own organic produce. Lettuce Link works through the food bank system to provide 15,000 seed packets and 2,000 plant starts to low-income people each year, and in cooperation with the food banks and Seattle P-Patches, provides training and one-on-one technical support to help people learn to garden organically. Lettuce Link also works in coalition with other non-profits on some of Seattle's original farmland. Marra Farm is a four acre site located in the South Park community. The farm is a place where people can come to learn about growing organic produce, food related issues, and environmental stewardship. Marra Farm is a community farm that engages people in sustainable agriculture and education while enhancing local food security. Lettuce Link would contribute to the new FPA Senior Nutrition program by offering fresh organic produce, an essential enhancement to any well balanced meal. There would also be opportunities for congregate meal participants to garden themselves, with transportation being provided by staff and volunteers of FPA's Senior & Adult Services Department.

All of FPA's food programs work extensively with Bastyr University's nutrition students to meet their practicum requirements while offering expertise to our program participants. The new FPA senior nutrition program would especially benefit from the student's knowledge, as there would be opportunities to directly relate senior health issues, such as diabetes and arthritis, to healthy eating.

FPA's Food Stamp Education would also be a partner in the new FPA Senior Nutrition program, as it has been in the past. We would conduct outreach at our meal sites. The Food Stamp Education program provides information and support to low-income people at risk of hunger and malnutrition due to food insecurity and to those who may be eligible to receive food stamps. Food Stamp Education collaborates with the Department of Social and Health Services to promote good nutrition and health among seniors, person's living with disabilities, the working poor and their children.

We anticipate that our new Senior Nutrition program would initially focus on quality, and would be modest in scope. We would like to serve meals to 100-200 low-income seniors. A meal site location would be determined based upon a survey of community need, perhaps in a neighborhood surrounding Marra Farm in the South Park Community.

Potential program participants would be actively involved in the specific design of the program so that it would truly be responsive to the needs of the community.

As the program would utilize volunteers and donated fresh organic produce, costs could be kept low. The program would target low-income seniors.

CONSOLIDATED FOOD MANAGEMENT (BILL FRANKS)

(Phone conversation)

CFM currently operates Mill Creek senior center in Kent, and helps manage food service for Northshore, Control Clover Park, and Harrison House. Food Services of America is primary food supplier. Focus on "from scratch" cooking. Might have on-site manager. Also consulting and on-site preparation ("processor for hire").

RFI ideas: Survey elders who don't go to meal sites -- find out likes/dislikes and reasons for not attending. Develop incentive to come to meal site -- free meal, free something. Look for new promotional ideas.